

# Creativity

*Brown Bag Event, Enhancing Creativity, September 2000*

What is half of 8? Four. Also 0. Cut the 8 in half. You get two 0's!

Being creative means combining knowledge and imagination.

## **Left Brain**

judges ideas (critical thinking)

***"Is this correct?"***

- language
- logical reasoning
- analysis
- performing sequential tasks

## **Right Brain**

produces ideas (creative thinking)

***"This is fun."***

- nonverbal
- symbolic
- intuitive response

Proficiency in thinking requires mastering all the approaches appropriate to production (creative thinking) and judgment (critical thinking) AS WELL AS the skills to move back and forth between production and judgment.

Usually by age 4, we know which path works for us:  
the critical thinking or the creative thinking path.

**How do we know if an idea or product or response is creative?**

when it is **BOTH (1) novel** and **(2) appropriate . . .**

Imagination is just one component of creativity.

There **is** some relationship between intelligence and creativity!

**Motivation** can be very important!

We need to feel that our work, talents, and efforts are appreciated!

A clue to those with a tendency to be creative  
is their being willing to solve problems!

## **Characteristics of Highly Creative People**

- risk takers (both work and play)
- high levels of talent
- highly independent (They seek approval **within** themselves.)
- skills and knowledge in the domain
- non-conforming
- playful attitude toward work
- task motivation
- deeply intense
- persevering

## **More Characteristics of Highly Creative People**

- high tolerance for ambiguity, willing to leave yourself open to having things being up in the air for a while, open to confusion
- preference for complexity
- like complicated outlooks (Asymmetry is O.K.)
- self-motivated
- curiosity
- dynamic personality
- mental health
- resourceful
- industrious

All of us can be creative, and we can be even more creative!  
You can make a deliberate choice to become more creative!

## **How can we be more creative?**

- Brainstorm.
  - Set aside time to think creatively.
  - Schedule your time.
  - Find the right place.
  - Set a time limit.
  - Think in advance about what you are going to do.
- Strive to become oblivious to less than ideal physical surroundings.
  - Look at problems in the same old way, which forces us to look somewhere else! (Overload the left side of the brain.)
  - Play. Exercise (for example, exercise to music just three mins./day.
  - Bore the left side of the brain.
  - Take a shower. (The right brain loves water.)
- Give people opportunities to fail
  - Play music, especially baroque and classical.
  - Tolerate the "off-beat."
  - Be open for surprise, no critique or judgment.
  - Applaud passion.
- Get out of your office!
  - Make the familiar strange.
  - Make the strange familiar.
  - Think outside the bounds.

School is linear. It looks for answers! It is left-brained because it is easy to test. We go into school as a question mark (?) and come out as a period (.).

We need humor. We need to take risks!

## What discourages creativity in our modern times?

❖ Time ❖

❖ Anxiety ❖

❖ Pressure ❖

### Creativity Killers

- **evaluation – fear of criticism – harsh words** (comparison with others, for example, mom, dad, boss)

Evaluation may be by editors, publisher, or critics. The solution is self-evaluation.

- **surveillance** (watching you during work, especially if work is complicated)
- **competition**
- **lack of confidence**
- **self-criticism**
- **fear of self-expression**
- **restricted choice**
- **stress**
- **routines**
- **focusing on all external or extrinsic reasons** for doing something

Intrinsic motivation is very important, in other words, when you do something for its own sake, interest, enjoyment, or satisfaction of the work.



### Four Stages in the Creative Process

1. Present or identify the problem.
2. Prepare for solving the problem.
  - Gather the information needed.
  - Learn new techniques.
  - Gain education
3. Generate new ideas or solutions.  
Then you may have to go back to #2.
4. Verify and validate ideas.

The process is not necessarily linear.

The process may need some “incubation.”